

State of California – Emergency Management Agency  
Fire and Rescue Branch

**OPERATIONS BULLETIN # 40**

**Subject:** Instructions for Local Government Application for use and activation of the Resource Ordering and Statusing System, (ROSS)

**PURPOSE:**

This bulletin formally establishes the Resource Ordering and Status System, hereby referred to as ROSS as the State-wide resource ordering system for the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System. ROSS has also been established as the standard resource ordering system for the California Wildfire Coordinating Group (CWCG), of which the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Fire Rescue Branch is a member. This Operational Bulletin describes those procedures by which fire department emergency dispatch centers, fire department emergency command centers (ECCs) and OES Mutual Aid Regional and Operational Area Coordination Centers within California must follow in order to be designated as official ROSS sites. Please note, the "ROSS Business Practices and Standards", developed by the California ROSS Implementation Team (CRIT) is available for review in detail by visiting <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/fire/management/training/ross/>.

**BACKGROUND:**

Since the inception of the Incident Command System the OES mutual aid dispatching system within the State of California has used a standardized resource ordering and processing system. That system or standard consisted of the use of a hard copy document identified as the Multi Agency Coordination System (MACS) 420. This paper process, which is still used as a backup today transitioned to an electronic format during the 1990s with advent of the Multi Incident Resource Processing System, (MIRPS). MIRPS was the predecessor to the current nationally deployed program known as ROSS. ROSS was developed by the National Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (NWCG) and implemented nationally in 2003 with the exception of California. The CWCG at that time agreed to adopt ROSS in California once it had been thoroughly and successfully tested. That testing process occurred during 2002 and 2003 and once completed the findings were delivered to the CWCG. In early 2004 the CWCG mandated that the newly established California ROSS Implementation Group represent the CWCG member agencies' interest in the development and implementation of the ROSS program state-wide. Per that direction a comprehensive plan to include the ROSS Business Practices was developed and an aggressive training program ensued after approval by the CWCG in the spring of 2005. Initially, this implementation was directed to only the forest agencies; however the OES Fire and Rescue Branch recognizing the importance of unification as it pertains to dispatch procedures within California adopted and implemented ROSS as well.

The use of ROSS by local government fire agencies is in support of CWCG wildland fire agencies and establishes a common system for all fire agencies in California; to assist State and Federal Forest Agencies in suppression of wildland fires via activation of local, inter-state and intra-state agreements.

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**INSTRUCTIONS: (Specific Criteria Required Becoming an Approved ROSS Site)**

To be designated a ROSS site the following is required:

Applicants will submit a “Letter of Intent” requesting to become an active ROSS site through their respective OES Mutual Aid Operational Area Coordinator, who will then forward such letter to the respective OES Regional Coordinator, who will forward the request with his/her concurrence to the Chief of the OES Fire and Rescue Branch. To insure that the OES Fire Branch has sufficient advanced notice to support and plan the applicant agency’s training needs and to insure the annual program of work includes ROSS applicant support; all applicant Letters of Intent are due no later than May 15 of the year prior to the desired start date. The letter should also identify the number of requested training slots needed for both ROSS Dispatcher and ROSS Administrator classes.

The minimum requirements to be an approved ROSS site are:

1. At least one ROSS trained dispatcher per shift
2. At least one ROSS trained administrator per shift
3. Successfully complete the ROSS Readiness Check list, available on the ROSS website at, <http://ross.nwcg.gov>. This includes, but is not limited to entry of all resources, overhead, aircraft, and equipment using the standard entry format for each resource category. Including locations and contact points as required. Entry of required selection areas, contract and agreements as needed, etc. should also be completed.

Upon completion of personnel training and adequate practice using ROSS practice sessions, and entry of all required data per the ROSS Readiness Check List; the OES Operational Area applicant will submit a final request for ROSS activation letter through their OES Operational Area Coordinator to the OES Regional Coordinator. The OES Regional Coordinator will forward the letter requesting ROSS activation with his/her concurrence to the Chief of the OES Fire Rescue Branch. The request for ROSS site activation will include a copy of the completed ROSS Readiness Check list as evidence of completing the minimum data entry and staffing requirements. Upon receipt of the letter requesting ROSS activation, the OES ROSS program manager will review the applicant's resource data as entered into ROSS for accuracy and compliance with the California ROSS Business Practice Guide. After successful review of the applicant's data entry in ROSS the OES ROSS Program Manager will recommend approval of the applicant to the Chief, OES Fire Rescue Branch who will then submit a letter of approval to the OES Regional Coordinator with copies to the OES Operational Area Coordinator and the appropriate GACC requesting ROSS activation for the applicant.

Designating Unit and/or Fire Department ROSS Data Administrators for ROSS Non-Dispatch units:

ROSS data administration personnel are encouraged at the unit/fire department level. ROSS Operational Area Dispatch Centers are limited in numbers and often serve multiple Op. Areas and agencies. Due to the significant volume of data that exists in some Operational Areas it would be advantageous for individual fire departments to designate, by letter, a ROSS Data Administrator(s). This can aid in reducing the Operational Area Dispatch Center workload, speed data entry, improve currency, accuracy and accountability of an

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individual fire department's equipment and personnel data entries. ROSS Data Administrators must complete the ROSS Dispatcher Course and the ROSS Administrator Course to be qualified and designated as a Unit/Department ROSS Data Administrator.

A Fire Department Chief desiring to establish ROSS Data Administrator(s) for their department will provide a letter to the Operational Area Coordinator designating no more than three, (3) individuals as Unit/Department ROSS Administrator(s), verifying completion of the required training. The Operational Area Dispatch Center through the Operational Area Coordinator will document acceptance to the requesting department chief with copies to the OES Region Chief. Operational Area Dispatch Centers will issue required passwords and maintain records of all designated ROSS Data Administrator(s) within their Operational Area.